

Ruthann Fainer
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March 14,2023

Dear Esteemed members of the Education Committee:

I am writing in regards to SB 1198. As Chairperson of a small town Board of Education, I am against the proposals in this bill. These proposals are duplicative, unnecessary and burdensome. Professional standards and reporting requirements are already in place to monitor air quality and its effect on people. OSHA, the Federal EPA and the State of CT DEEP all have regulations regarding air quality in schools, which all districts are required to follow. Each school district has an intimate knowledge of its buildings and HVAC systems and should be allowed to operate them within the existing HVAC parameters. "Optimal thermal comfort" is not a measurable unit. School districts are data driven institutions. Districts cannot operate effectively without definable data. A regulation regarding schools operations using some arbitrary guidelines to determine the temperature and humidity in a building will not improve comfort for staff nor students and is disruptive to the education process. The majority of school districts have older school buildings without air conditioning which under the proposed bill could possibly mean the closure of schools from May to October. There is no way a school district would be able to meet the 180 days of school mandate under such a system. School staff in cooperation with administration are experienced in managing the classrooms throughout the school year. The decisions regarding the use of school buildings should remain in the hands of the Superintendent and his/her staff.

The proposed bill would add gratuitous financial and reporting duties to school districts. The Thomaston Central office staff consists of a Superintendent, a part-time Business Manager, a part-time Human Resource Specialist, a part-time District Lead Custodian, an administrative assistant and an accounts payable position. Many small districts, like Thomaston, have similar staffing. They do not have the required staff or funding to administer the additional level of standards that you are proposing.

I respectfully ask that you do not move forward with SB1198 as it is proposed and let the local Boards of Education continue to manage their districts and buildings without more unnecessary regulation.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Ruthann Fainer
Chairperson, Thomaston Board of Education